A JOURNEY BY TWO JESUITS FROM DHUFĀR TO SAN'Ā IN 1590

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THE JOURNEY of the Spanish Jesuits Antonio de Montserrat and Pedro Páez through Wādī Hadhramaut to Marib and San'ā as prisoners of the Arabs in 1590 has received less attention than it deserves. Helfritz is the only other European who claims to have reached San'ā by the same route, and Philby is the only other known to have approached Marib from the east, except for a mysterious person posing as a Moor of whom Arnaud heard.[1] Even the cities of Tarīm and Hainin were not, so far as we know, again visited by a European traveller until the nineteenth century. The account which Páez himself wrote of their journey is therefore of great interest. It is translated below.

The narrative of his captivity in Arabia is contained in chapters 15 to 21 of Book 3 of his 'Historia de Ethiopia,' which he dedicated to the General of the Jesuits in May 1622, only a short time before his death. In all probability therefore he was writing some thirty years after the events with which we are concerned. Though a Spaniard from Olmedo in Castile he wrote this work in Portuguese. He was in his last years one of the most powerful, and doubtless also the busiest, men in Ethiopia, for the Emperor, whom he had persuaded to abandon the Coptic Church and be reconciled with Rome, relied upon his advice in a great variety of spiritual and temporal matters. It is not surprising that some characteristics of his book betray hasty composition and lack of revision. His sentences sprawl, his vocabulary is repetitive, as if he did not spend time in thinking of synonyms, and he is guilty of anacolouthon; this perhaps helps to explain some of his errors of fact.

Some years later another Jesuit, Manoel de Almeida, included in his 'Historia de Ethiopia a alta ou Abassia' an account of this episode which is only slightly abridged from Páez. The histories of both Páez and Almeida remained in manuscript until they were incorporated by Beccari in his 'Rerum Aethiopicarum scriptores occidentales inediti,' 1903–17.[2] Meanwhile, in 1660, Balthasar Telles published a work compiled from them, 'Historia geral de Ethiopia a alta,' and he gave the story of the Arabian journey in some detail. It escaped the notice of the historians of Arabian exploration, Hogarth and Kiernan, and Kammerer seems to be the only scholar who has discussed the topographical problems connected with it.[3]

[1] The saiyids of Hadhramaut tell of a traveller called Al-Maghribī, *i.e.* the Moor, and say that he wrote a Rihla, or account of his travels. This may perhaps exist in MS.

[2] Páez' history will be found in vols. 2 and 3, Almeida's in vols. 5 to 7.

[3] "Le plus ancien voyage d'un occidental en Hadramaout," *Bull. Soc. Roy. Géogr. d'Egypte*, 18 (1933) 143–167. There are also short descriptions in two books on Ethiopia, Sir Charles Rey, 'The Romance of the Portuguese in Abyssinia,' 1929, and Elaine Sanceau, 'The Portuguese in Search of Prester John,' 1943. There are several inaccuracies in the brief account given by Cerulli in his article on Páez in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*.

The Red Sea port of Mocha, from Dapper's 'Beschryving van Asie,' Amsterdam, 1680

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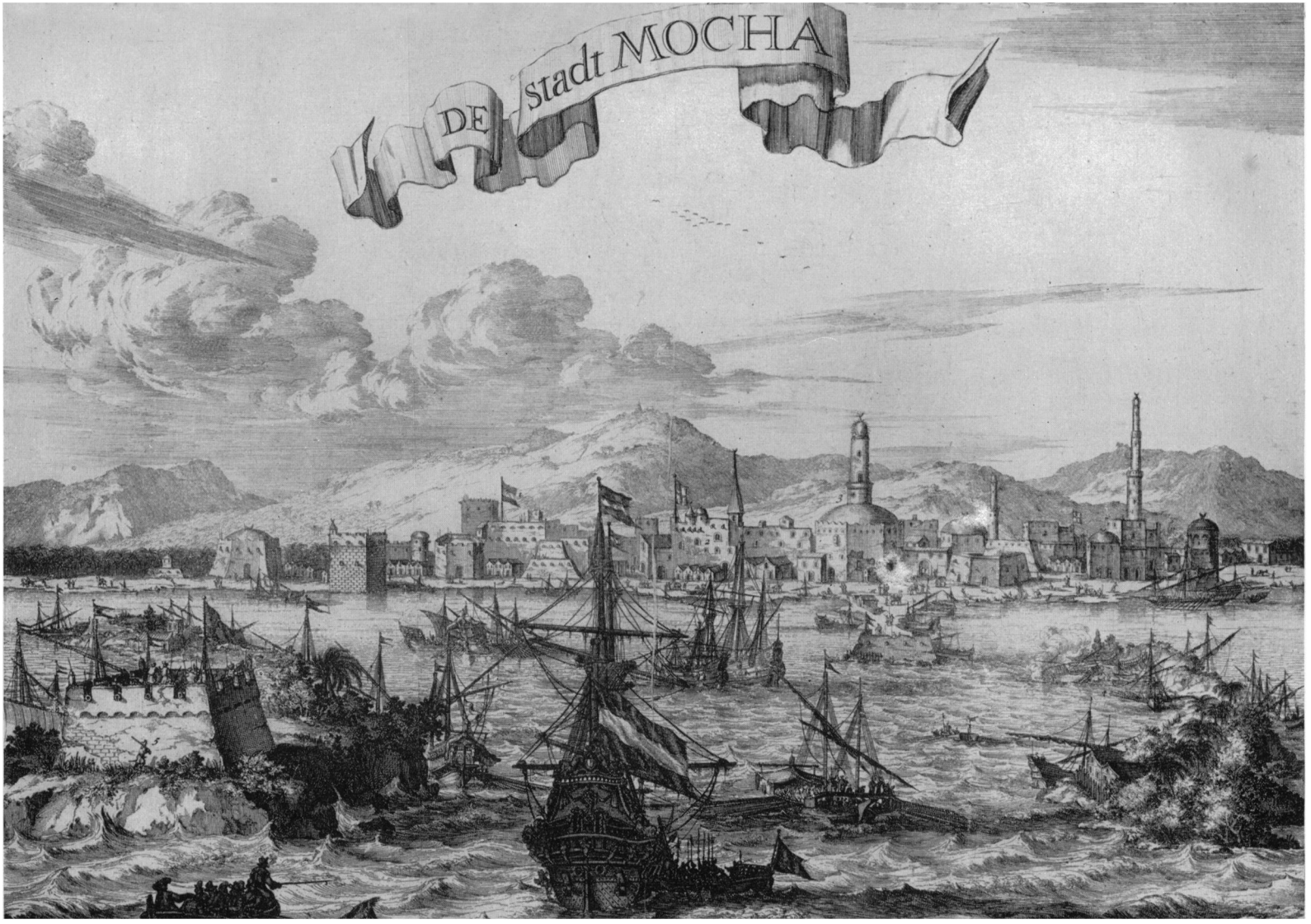

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The first part of the narrative may be summarized very briefly. In consequence of an order from the King (Philip II of Spain and I of Portugal) that a supreme effort should be made to send priests to Ethiopia, Montserrat and Páez left Goa in February 1589.[1] Unable to find a captain who would take them to Massawa, they changed their plans and decided to make their way through Iraq, Syria and Egypt. They were warned against this at Ormuz and embarked for Zeila but were captured by Arabs on 14 February 1590, soon after their ship had left the Kuria Muria Islands.

THE NARRATIVE

Next day they landed us a little before we reached the city of Dofâr.[2] As we were going along the shore a Moor,[3] whom we were taking with us to act as guide into the interior of Ethiopia, began to urge that Father Antonio Monserrate should say that he was a Moor and that they would then let us go. The father replied: "Because you see me here, do you dare to talk so disgracefully? I am not one to say so if I had to die a thousand times." At this the Moor was silent. When we arrived at the house of the captain of the city many Moors assembled and in their presence he asked us numerous questions about our journey. When these were finished he said: "I know well that you are spies and are going to Ethiopia to persuade the Emperor to make war on the Turks." He ordered them to put us in a room farther inside the house, where we were confined. We could not sleep all night because there were so many fleas and bugs. Next day they moved us to some very poor mud buildings which they regarded as a fort. We spent several days there and suffered much hunger; almost nothing of the little we were ordered to be given reached us because our guards ate it. While we were there the Moor whom we were taking from Mascâte visited us. He told us the captain of the city had decided not to kill us but to send us to the place where his King was staying so that the latter could condemn us to whatever death he chose. So that we should not say when we arrived there that the captain had taken away much baggage from us, he showed us what we had had with us in front of many persons and asked us if it was all there. We answered that it was and he then ordered it to be tied up and taken to the King as it was. In our baggage was a small image of Our Lady and another of the Magdalene. When they found these some of them turned away their faces and began abusing them to show their strictness in their accursed sect which condemns the adoration and the painting of images. A Xarife [4] (that is, one of the family of Mahamêd) blamed them for this and said that they were not doing right

[1] Páez says 1588, but Beccari has shown that all the dates he mentions in connection with this journey are one year too early. See Beccari, vol. 2, p. xii.

[2] Dhufār. The spelling of names in the narrative is that of the original text. Elsewhere it is a translation in accordance with the latest state of R.G.S. II.

[3] All Muslims were called Moors by the Portuguese.

[4] Sharīf. It is curious that the term "Saiyid" is not used, for the Hadhrami Saiyids are descended from Husain, whereas "Sharīf" is generally applied to the posterity of al-Hasan. The term "Sharīf" is of course applied to the Saiyids as an honorific, and their women-folk are known as *saiyidas* or *sharīfas*.

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since, although the painter had sinned, the pictures might be of holy men. They were all silent at this.

How they took us to the Moorish King and what happened to us on the way and on our arrival.

When the captain of Dofâr decided to send us to the King, they put us in a boat along with the baggage and guards and conveyed us by sea for five days.[1] We disembarked by a stream and travelled inland, not following a path and going among stones and thorn-bushes for about two leagues to a little village. I had been given some very tight Moorish shoes [2] and so I arrived there with my feet raw and covered with blisters. When we left next day they took us on foot behind the camels along a very stony path. I suffered great pain as I was going barefoot for my feet were very swollen and raw and I could not wear the shoes they had given me. Father Antonio Monserrate was not able to keep up with the camels, being already an old man.[3] Next day they allowed us to climb up among the camel loads. We entered into a great sand desert. When it was time to eat they lit a fire and prepared a quantity of locusts which they gave us to eat, but we could not put them into our mouths. Seeing this, they made a cake from a little wheat flour which they took from what we had had with us on the boat, and cooked it on the fire. Thereafter they used to give us this and nothing else. Our only regret was that it was very small and so we were always hungry.

There was little water in the desert so they measured out what we were to drink from the supply the camels carried. One day when we saw in the distance a valley and a large stream apparently flowing through it, we were very glad and were eager to drink as much as we liked. When we reached it we found it was only sand lifted up by the wind and rushing along like water. Then it did not rise more than three or four spans above the ground. Our escort said that when there was a strong wind the sand would sometimes be carried in one direction and would make great hills, and at another time in another according to the way the winds blew. The sun on these sands was such that the Syrian youth [4] and I were as good as blind and our eyes were running continuously because we had nothing but some little white caps on our heads; everything had been taken from us. Father Monserrate had been left a piece of coarse cloth which he put on his head and with it protected himself from the sun.

We travelled through the desert for ten days without meeting people or coming upon a path, for the wind covers it up with sand, so they set their course by the sun and at night by the Pole Star. On the last day at evening

[1] This voyage avoided the necessity of traversing the intervening territory of the Sultan of Qishn which was not subject to the Kathīrī Sultan, though Dhufār belonged to him.

[2] "Tight shoes" presents a difficulty because Arab shoes are not tight, but open, sometimes loose and flappy. When used by the unaccustomed they chafe the skin and the thongs cut into the flesh. If we could read *apertos* (open) for *apertados* (tight), it would be more in line with what obtains to-day.

[3] He was fifty, or nearly so, at this time, according to Páez, chapter 15, *supra*.

[4] He spoke Arabic, Persian, Turkish and some Portuguese, and was accompanying the priests as an interpreter.

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we arrived at a big city which they call Tarîm.[1] The news spread that Portuguese prisoners were being brought and many people came out to see us before we had entered the city. At first they looked at us in amazement and said nothing. Then they asked our escort if we believed in Mahamêd. When the escort said that we did not, the people began calling us cafarûn, which in Arabic means lawless men.[2] They abused and insulted us a great deal, competed at spitting in our faces and began to lay hands on us. Our escort could not defend us as there was such a crowd in the streets that the camels could not break through. At last the situation became so bad that they were forced to take us into a house in great haste as the boys were beginning to pick up stones to throw at us. They kept us there for a day. On the next, before dawn, they took us away on foot very hurriedly until we were well outside the city, since they were afraid lest there might be a tumult when we left like the one there had been when we arrived. The camels came after us.

On that and the two following days we passed through many towns, but what had happened to us at Tarîm did not occur in any of them. There were many ruined forts along the mountain ridges [3] and our escort said that the Christians had built them in ancient times. In the last town we found a brother of the King named Xafêr.[4] He ordered them to take us to his house which was large. He was sitting on the floor on rugs, as is the Moors' custom. When we arrived he received us with courtesy, and made us sit down and be served with Câhua,[5] which is water boiled with the rind of a fruit they call Bun,[6] and which they drink very hot in place of wine.[7] He asked us who we were and where we came from, and after talking for a time, dismissed us. As we left he said to our escort: "These men are not to be made Moors." We left there that evening, travelled all night and arrived as day was breaking at

[1] Tarīm is a holy city, with innumerable saints buried in its cemeteries, and a centre of Islamic learning. To bring Christians there was not likely to be welcomed by the inhabitants. At the present day Hadhramaut does not permit Jews to enter at all.

[2] *Kāfirūn*, infidels. Originally "concealing," hence "concealing God's benefits," "ungrateful to God."

[3] By forts on the mountain ridges we suggest that Páez is not referring to the Jōl top, but to the spurs of rock that stick out of the scree slope below it. The tradition that there were Christians in Hadhramaut persists to this day. 'Abdullāh b. Muhammad al-Saqqāf, 'Tārīkh al-Shu'arā al-Hadhramīyīn,' Cairo, 1356 A.H., vol. 1, pp. 40 *et seqq.* and 48, mentions two Christian poets of the Kinda tribe born in Dū'an, and a Jew of Barhūt living about the time of the appearance of Islam. It seems that certain sections of the Kinda were Christians, Imru'u'l-Qais, the famous pre-Islamic poet, mentions an anchorite. At Husn al-Ranād in Tarīm an alabaster carving was found some years ago which resembles an angel's head.

[4] Ja'far b. Badr Bū Tuwairiq. See Salāh al-Bakrī, 'Tārīkh Hadhramaut al-Siyāsī, Cairo, 1935, vol. 1, p. 131.

[5] *Qahwa*, coffee. The earliest reference to coffee by a European writer that has been traced antedates this journey by only eight years. See L. Rauwolf, 'Aigentliche beschreibung der Raisz,' 1582, pp. 102–3.

[6] *Bunn*, the coffee plant, or more properly, berry. Coffee in South-west Arabia is almost invariably made from the husk, and not the bean itself. In Hadhramaut coffee is made to-day with the husk, some berries, and spices such as ginger, all pounded and roasted together, the resultant concoction being known as *sharīkh*. Coffee at one time came under the prohibition of the *ulema*, and it seems that the earlier Kathīrī Sultans may actually have forbidden its use in Saiūn.

[7] *Qahwa* was originally a word for wine.

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a city they call Heinân,[1] where the King was; he is called Sultân Humâr, that is King Humâr.[2] They took us to the fort where he lived. It was very large and lofty though built of adobes, as the buildings of that country usually are. They put us in a very small turret on the wall where we were no little troubled by the people who came to see us that day.

Two days after we had arrived the King ordered them to give us our clothes to put on, for we were nearly naked, but they did not give us everything. In the evening they took us to a flat roof in the loftiest part of the fort where we found the King seated on brocaded cloth in a place raised about four spans from the floor. He was wearing a tunic of very fine green cloth and on his head a toque fringed with gold thread. He would be a man of forty, swarthy and a good height. Before him was seated on rugs on the floor a Xarife, that is to say, a descendant of Mahamêd, whom they honour greatly on that account. All the rest, of whom there were many, were standing. We went so far as to kiss the King's hand and he invited us pleasantly to sit down. But he did not want to have our companion the Syrian as interpreter because they do not think well of Syrians. So he sent for a renegade woman of Peguan [3] race who was with the Queen. When she came the King spoke in Arabic and she said to us in Portuguese: "The King says: 'Do not be afflicted because God has brought you here.' I tell you that your sins have brought you among such evil people." He then asked us who we were and why we were going to Ethiopia. We answered that we were fathers and that we were going to Ethiopia to be with the Portuguese who had been there since they had first entered the country in old times.[4] Afterwards he asked us various questions, detaining us all the evening. At the end of the conversation we asked him as a favour to order that our books of offices should be returned to us. He replied: "Inxa Ala, Inxa Ala,[5] If God will, if God will." With that he dismissed us and we were taken back to the place where we had been before. Next day he sent us our breviaries and other books which were a great consolation to us and we thanked God for the great mercy of enabling us to say divine office.

[1] Hainin is the well-known town about the entrance to the main Hadhramaut valley in the west. It had a fort and market in Hamdānī's time, and he describes it as a big village (Qarya). Even at this time it may not have been a very large town, but it was a military base for Badr during his wars in Wāhidī, 'Aulaqī and Shabwa territory. To-day the fort is ruined, but of adobe as Páez says, and it has evidently been a large building. It stands on a little peak south of the old town, which is now in ruins. Fragments of eighteenth and nineteenth century Chinese pottery lie about, and some native Arab glass. But for the lack of water the fort would be impregnable. For photographs see D. van der Meulen, and H. von Wissmann, 'Hadramaut,' Leiden, 1932, p. 105. The area is being silted over with blown sand.

[2] *I.e.* 'Umar b. Badr Bū Tuwairiq al-Kathīrī, of the Āl Kathīr, the dynasty which rules Tarīm and Saiūn to-day. He was not the immediate successor of Badr. The latter was followed by 'Abdullāh b. Badr, then by his own son, 'Umar b. 'Abdullāh. 'Umar b. Badr succeeded towards the last decade of the tenth century A.H., and died in 1021 A.H. (A.D. 1612–13); Ja'far was his brother. 'Umar is described as being of noble character, a sound administrator and generous to the learned.

[3] *I.e.* Burmese.

[4] There had been Portuguese in Ethiopia continuously since the landing of Dom Cristovão da Gama at Massa wa in 1541.

[5] *In shā' 'llāh.*

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We were there many days without being able to know the King's intentions, until one day the woman who had been our interpreter came to visit us. She told us that the King wanted to offer us for ransom but that he dared not do so until he knew what the Turks, to whom he paid tribute, would say. It therefore seemed to her likely that we should be moved. We asked her how she had been captured. She said that she was going from Châul to Ormuz in a ship when a storm arose and drove them to Xaêr [1] a harbour belonging to that King. As they were riding before the city some Moors came out to them in a little boat and told them that they were friends of the Portuguese and that they could safely land and take the refreshment they wanted. Thereupon almost everyone in the ship disembarked. When they reached land they were very well received but the next day they were seized. Moors had gone out to the ship with some boats, had captured it without resistance and had then brought them inland to the same city where the King's father was living. He had worked hard to convert them all, especially the Portuguese, of whom there were eight.[2] But they had always been very firm in the faith until they had died of disease, leaving only a certain black man. He used to be very friendly with a Moor who went every year with goods to the coast of Melinda. One day he asked the Moor to take a letter for him to the Captain there. The Moor said he would willingly take it and bring back an answer. However, he took it and gave it to the King, who did not neglect to read it. He said in the letter that if they were to come in a foist to a certain place which he named, they could, without meeting any resistance, take prisoners with whom they could ransom him and other Christians from India who were there as captives. The King was very angry at this, sent for him and asked if the letter was his. He answered that it was. The King said: "Then either you must become a Moor, or your head must be cut off." He replied that he was not the man to become a Moor, that he would do as he had chosen to do and, as the conversation went on, spoke with much Christian constancy and freedom. The King was very indignant and ordered his head to be cut off in his presence and thrown with the trunk through a window of the fort. After that they had kept the woman in irons for four years so that she should become a Moor. Then seeing herself in such a plight and having no hope of ransom, she had said she would be a Moor. But she said she was not one at heart and she had been there for forty years. We explained to her how glorious the death of that Portuguese had been and what she must do for her salvation, but though she shed many tears it was of no avail.

We spent four months in the prison suffering great privations, as do the natives as well, because that province of Arabia, which is called Hadarmôt, is very poor; most of it is desert and what is cultivated yields little because of

[1] Shihr.

[2] Bal-Faqīh al-Shihrī (Mukalla MS), p. 290, under the annals for the year 951 A.H. (1544–45) says: "They found a Frankish small boat (*barsha*) with some cargo, containing eight Franks, and they drew the boat up on the shore, and killed one of the Franks and took one prisoner. I think it had cast off from one of the Frankish ports." The King's father is, of course, Badr Bū Tuwairiq ob. 977 A.H. (A.D. 1569–70), and he probably used the Portuguese as gunners or technical assistants, as the Turks did in the Yemen.

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the great shortage of rain. They have some wheat and barley [1] but their usual sustenance is millet. They also have some date-palms. The men are swarthy and usually dress badly. They wear their hair very long, curl it with hot irons [2] and then saturate it with butter so that when the wind raises the dust it becomes dirty. The women go covered with white clothes [3] when they leave their houses and their faces are hidden by a black veil like a nun's. They have some of the customs followed in ancient times in Israel. Thus, when a daughter of the King died, many women came from the neighbourhood on foot, their heads covered with dust. With much lamentation they took the Queen to a house near the fort where they stayed for a month or so mourning. They used to go out every day, morning and evening, on to the roof of the house, which was very large. They ranged themselves in two rows, face to face, clapped their hands together and from time to time threw their arms round each other's necks crying out loudly as if urging each other to lament more.

They do not bury their dead in the mosques but in the open country, as do all the Moors. They put many stones on the graves and anyone who can erects four pillars of stone and lime with a little dome upon them.[4]

They are all great devotees of Mahamêd in that country, and so they usually go about saying: "Ala Mahamêd,—God Mahamêd." [5] He who takes care of the mosque calls them to prayer, before dawn, at midday and in the evening,[6] saying in a loud voice from the top of a tower (which some call Alcorâm,[7] others Menâra [8]); "La Ila, ila Ala, Mahamêd Raçûl Ala, Alaiçalâ, alaiçalâ," [9] which means: "There is no God but God; Mahamêd is God's messenger. Pray to God." Herein they deny the Most Holy Trinity, for they allege that there is no Son. Therefore also it says in the first chapter of

[1] *Cevada.*

[2] Presumably Páez reports what he saw, but the hair of the Bedouin and peasants generally curls naturally, and they do not use curling-irons. The upper classes, the Saiyids, do not consider curly hair a mark of beauty, and many townspeople keep the head shaved. Tribesmen dress their hair with butter, or rather *ghee*, as Páez says.

[3] White is not generally worn in Hadhramaut by women when going out of doors nowadays, and Bal-Faqīh al-Shihrī mentions "black Hadhrami cloth" as a product of the country in one or two places, but fashions in women's clothing do change in Hadhramaut as elsewhere.

[4] For tombs in Hadhramaut see "The Cemeteries of Tarīm," in *Muséon*, 62, 1949.

[5] Presumably *Allāh Muhammad*, invoking God *and* Muhammad. Though there is no comma between the words Páez cannot be supposed to have been so ignorant about Islam as to think that the Prophet was invoked as God. From the various Arabic expressions that occur in the text one can judge that Páez acquired his Arabic very sketchily, and one may suggest that what he heard was the phrase *Sallī 'alā Muhammad*, Bless Muhammad. It is quite true that this phrase is used by people in the streets, *e.g.* porters asking passers by to make room, or when going along a dark street, to warn others of their presence.

[6] The call to prayer is of course made five times a day.

[7] This is the word normally used by the Portuguese for the Koran, as it is in this paragraph. There is no Arabic term for a minaret resembling it. Almeida has copied Páez' mistakes. He writes: "The Caciz (*i.e. qādhī*) calls them from the Alcorão three times a day" (Almeida, Bk. 5, ch. 2. Beccari, vol. 6, p. 12).

[8] *Manāra*, minaret.

[9] *Lā ilāha illā 'llāh. Muhammad rasūl Allāh. Haiyā 'alā 'l-salā. Haiyā 'alā 'l-salā.* This is a much abridged version of the Muslim call to prayer.

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their Alcorâm: "God does not beget and was not begotten." [1] When they say those words by which they are called to prayer, they cover their ears with their thumbs. When Father Antonio Monserrate asked one of them why he did so, he answered that those words had such great virtue and efficacy that if they heard them they would burst. "I am very surprised at that" (said the father) "because I have heard them many times and many Moors hear them every day, and they have never affected me nor have I heard of any Moor that burst. Doubtless if it were true all the Moors would already have burst." With that the Moor became angry and went away without a word in answer.

How they took us to the Turks and examined us when we reached them

After we had spent four months in the Moorish King's keeping a Turkish Baxa [2] of the kingdom they call Yamân, which begins at the entrance of the strait of Meca,[3] received notice of us. As the King was tributary to him he wrote to him to send us there at once, since all Portuguese prisoners belonged to the Great Turk. The King was very sorry at this but as he has little power against the Turks, he decided to send us and with us four very fine horses so that he should not be accused of having taken much baggage from us, or of having been to blame in keeping us there so long without reporting it. He called the Moor who was to take us and said to him that he was to take great care on the road to give us food and everything else that was necessary, without waiting for us to speak, as we never asked for anything. He also ordered that we should be given horses on which to travel and a good guard as there were many robbers on that road.

When we had everything ready we left, on the Eve of St. John the Baptist. After travelling for two days we reached the last fort [4] of that kingdom, where they put water into leather bottles [5] and loaded them on to the camels. We went through a desert travelling at full speed for four days and nights without resting except at midday and at nightfall when the men and camels had their food. Then they lingered very little; there is not a drop of water in all that desert and so they were very afraid that the weather might become cloudy and prevent them from seeing the Pole Star, by which they were guided at night. There was no path, or sign of one, and if they had not travelled at night the water they carried would not have sufficed. We endured great hardships during those days, both because of the very vile gait of camels when hurried, and because of lack of sleep, which we did not dare to take when riding for fear of falling, as camels are very tall. In spite of travelling in such haste, and of the very great heat, they did not drink a drop of water the whole time.

On the fifth day in the morning we reached a well where we stayed resting until evening; we then resumed travelling for the desert was not yet at an end. When morning came bandits surprised a Xarife who had remained

[1] Not the first chapter, but the 112th.

[2] Pasha, or Bāshā.

[3] Mecca. The "Strait of Mecca" was a common Portuguese name for the Red Sea.

[4] Presumably Husn al-'Abr.

[5] Properly, of course, skins, though leather bottles are used for containing oils, etc.

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behind and robbed him. It was of no use for him to say that he was of the family of Mahamêd. He afterwards showed himself much affected by this, and said they had not been satisfied with robbing him, but had given him many blows and punches without respecting his descent from Mahamêd.[1]

Next day we reached a small place called Melquîs,[2] where there were ruins of large buildings, and many stones with ancient lettering which the natives can neither read nor explain. There was a courtyard more than half a league away in which they used at one time to be buried. When we asked them what that building was, they answered that it had once been a very great city and that Queen Sabba had had many cattle there. If this is true it confirms what Brother Luis de Urreta [3] states to be beyond doubt in the sixth chapter of his first book. In order to reconcile the opinions of those who say that Queen Sabba, when she went to Jerusalem to see Solomon, set out from Ethiopia, and of those who claim that she set out from Arabia, he says that Queen Sabba was also mistress of part of Arabia Felix, inhabited by the Sabaeans and Homeritae. So when she went to Jerusalem she set out from Ethiopia, crossed the Red Sea, visited her vassals' territory on her way, and went on from there to Jerusalem. In this way both are telling the truth. We have already spoken of this subject in our first book, so that here I only remark upon it in passing.[4]

Pursuing our journey from Melquîs, we travelled for twelve days [5] through inhabited but very rough country. In crossing a wide stream Father Antonio Monserrate fell from his camel. As there was little water in it he struck the ground so forcefully that he did not recover consciousness for a long time; he was still badly injured when we reached the city of Çanâ,[6] where the Baxa of the Turks was. The governor, whom they call Subaxî,[7] came out to meet us on the road near the city, with men on horse and on foot beating kettle-

[1] The Saiyids not bearing arms, and having a special position, pass freely among many of the tribes. In view of the consideration they enjoy in South Arabia this man's indignation is not surprising.

[2] Evidently Marib. It is suggested that the name is derived from Haram Bilqīs, Mahram Bilqīs, names which are perhaps cognate with Umm al-Qīs which the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, on Glaser's authority, gives as the name of an open space or *maidān* in the ruins of the old city. This is the first reference to Himyaritic inscriptions by a European writer.

[3] Luis de Urreta, 'Historia eclesiástica, política, natural y moral de los grandes y remotos reynos de la Etiopía,' Valencia, 1610, pp. 66–70. Urreta contends that there were two provinces called Saba, one in Ethiopia, and one, properly Sheba, in Arabia. He is often mentioned, and usually contradicted by Páez, who had been asked by the Father Provincial of the Society at Goa to write a work on Ethiopia which would refute Urreta's allegations about the activities of the Jesuits there. See the dedication of his history by Páez to the General of the Jesuits in Beccari, vol. 2.

[4] Páez refers to the Queen of Sheba's journey in Book 1, chapter 3.

[5] This, on the face of it, is surprisingly slow. Arnaud states that the journey from San'ā to Marib and back takes 14 or 15 days, T. J. Arnaud, "Relation d'un voyage a Mareb (Saba) dans l'Arabie méridionale," *Journal Asiatique*, 4, 5, Paris, 1845. Nazīh al-Muaiyad al-'Azm says that the caravans from San'ā reach Marib in about five days, 'Rihla fī 'l-Bilād al-'Arabīya al-Sa'īda,' pt. 2, p. 105.

[6] San'ā.

[7] Turkish *sūbdshī*, a police superintendent. Judging from the Arabic annals this term refers to a fairly high-ranking official.

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drums. He ordered that the father and I should go on foot before his horse,[1] and in this way they took us through the principal streets of the city to the fort where the Baxa lived.

The rest of the narrative contains nothing of topographical interest except for the following brief description of San'ā in chapter 21:

"It was a very great city in ancient times but after the Turks had taken it the population declined so that there remained not more than about 2500 houses, of which 500 belonged to Jews. Within the walls, which are of thick mud with many towers, there are numerous gardens and orchards with many of the fruits that there are in Portugal. All are watered from wells, for there is no spring within the city."

The two Jesuits remained at San'ā until 1595. They were then taken to Mocha where they spent about a year before being ransomed and sent back to India. Both fell ill as a result of their sufferings and Montserrat succumbed. Páez, however, recovered, and in 1603 he succeeded in reaching Ethiopia where he passed the rest of his life.

APPENDIX

Hadhramaut under the Kathīri Sultans during the Portuguese era

One receives the impression on reading the history of Bal-Faqīh al-Shihrī (Mukalla MS.) that the Kathīrī Sultans were on the whole very tolerant of Christians, and that they were more interested in obtaining a ransom for their prisoners than in killing them. The Portuguese too, seem to have made it a sort of business to capture Muslim prisoners for ransom, but a good deal of simple trading between the two faiths is recorded. Badr Bū Tuwairiq used Turks, Portuguese and Mahris in his armies according to Bal-Faqīh, and though he tried to persuade the Portuguese to become Muslims no great pressure seems to have been put upon them to do so. In his expansionist policy towards the west, Shabwa, Wāhidī, and 'Aulaqī territory, Badr probably had enough to occupy him without fighting the Turks or Portuguese, with both of whom he treated at various times. At one time he even had to buy the Portuguese off Shihr. His alliance with the Turks however does seem to mark a definite change in policy, and he may have been further pressed to this line of action by the *ulema* who disapproved of alliances with the Christians. Although according to Salāh al-Bakrī, 'Fī Janūb Jazīrat al-'Arab,' Cairo, 1949, Badr at one time held Najrān, it seems that he never managed to expand into Mahra country. His successors of whom very little is known, never seem to have been so powerful. It was during the reign of one of his successors that the Spanish Jesuits were brought to Hadhramaut.

The route of the Jesuit Fathers

Dhufār to Tarīm. The identification of the route followed by the fathers to Tarīm presents several notable difficulties. The principal of these is that they cannot themselves identify the point on the coast where they landed, and the second is the description of the route to Tarīm as lying through sandy deserts.

[1] Sumptuary laws in the Yemen require that Jews should not ride horses, and it may have been the feeling that Christians should not ride beside a Muslim that caused the Turks to make the priests dismount.

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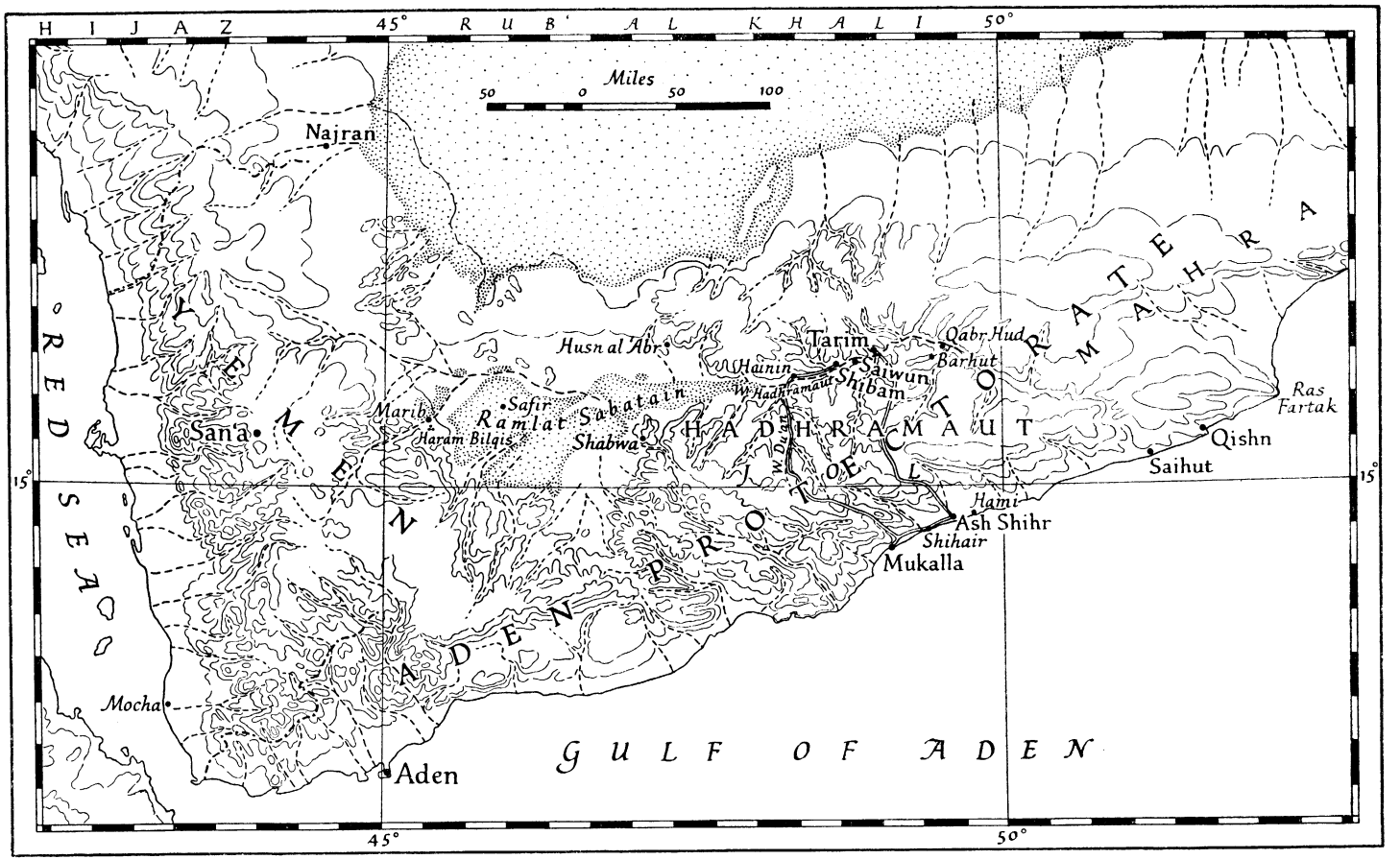

South-west Arabia

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At some indefinite date towards the end of February, and it is significant that the vaguest reckoning of the itinerary lies during the first days of their captivity when, perhaps, they were expecting to meet a speedy end, the fathers were sent off by dhow from Dhufār to the Sultan of Hadhramaut, 'Umar b. Badr Bū Tuwairiq al-Kathīrī. If reasons be required to explain why they should be sent by sea, let it be stated that a sea-journey would be quicker, easier and cheaper than the land-route, especially as the monsoon would then be blowing south west. Another reason, a political one, is that the Mahra with their Sultan at Qishn had been enemies in the past with Badr Bū Tuwairiq who never seems to have been able to develop his expansionist policy in their direction, and in 938 H. (A.D. 1531–32), nearly sixty years before, the Mahra had even threatened to take Shihr. As Badr had contracted a Turkish alliance, the Mahra probably inclined towards the Portuguese, and in default of further information at the moment we may assume that Mahra was still unfriendly to the Kathīris. At any rate it was undoubtedly politically impossible to send the prisoners to the Kathīri Sultan by land.

The next question is the point to which the fathers were despatched. Here the sole possible conclusion is that they were to go to Shihr, or at least to one of the lesser ports of the region. Shihr lies at the southern end of one of the principal routes to the Wādī Hadhramaut; it was the chief coastal administrative centre where one could hope to pick up news of the whereabouts of the Sultan, and in any case, five days' sailing at this time of year would take the travellers down to this region. But the prisoners were not landed at Shihr, they disembarked at a stream, and travelled inland. A possible explanation for this odd proceeding is that they may have overshot Shihr, a happening said to be by no means infrequent because if there be any slight obscurity in the atmosphere, Shihr, lying on a flat sandy littoral, is not easy to locate.

It is suggested therefore, that the party landed a little distance east or west of Shihr, perhaps near Hāmī to the east where there is a hot spring, the old city being concealed in the hills behind, and not visible from the sea, or else below Shihair to the west. Perhaps the leader of the party on picking up the information that the Sultan was not down at the coast, decided to save time by not entering Shihr, and joined the Shihr–Tarīm route at a point above the port.

So far then, a reconstruction of the route is simple, but nowhere in this region can we find a desert of the sort that Páez described. In the environs of Shihr it is true that there is quite a considerable amount of sand which Páez may have remembered, but the route to Tarīm lies across mountains and *jōls*, and they would have passed the sandy coastal area in the first day. By a process of elimination however, it is possible to show that the party cannot have arrived at Tarīm across deserts of sand. Kammerer's suggested landing-point in Mahra country is impossible as no journey could be made over such a vast extent of country in ten days, and in any case recent exploration tends to show that Mahra territory is a country of *wadis* running generally towards the coast. Furthermore, where Kammerer's theory is concerned, he fails to allow for a long enough sea-journey. The time factor excludes any possibility of their having come into Tarīm through the Empty Quarter from the north. Had they come up the Masīlah they would have mentioned the abundance of water, inhabitants, etc. Had they come up by a route to the west of Shihr they would equally not have gone through sandy desert, and in any case they would not have finished up in Tarīm, but Shibām.

We therefore conclude that writing some thirty years later, Páez tended to confuse his sufferings in the Empty Quarter or its off-shoots, with the first journey over the stony *jōls*. He must have kept some sort of record of his

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travels, as the times taken to cross given distances can, at least, be fitted quite well to the circumstances, but during this period of their adventures the fathers probably had no means of writing a journal, for their breviaries were not returned to them till they arrived at Hainin, and they may not even have had writing materials at their disposal till they came to San'ā.

Ten days would be a very suitable time for an unloaded caravan to take to reach Tarīm from the coast. There are many ways across the *jōl* to Tarīm, but recent Arab authors such as Muhammad b. Hashim, 'Rihla ilā 'l-Thaghrain,' Cairo, 1350 H., give a route 'Aqabat al-'Arsha, al-Ghalāghīl. Arriving from the empty *jōl*, the travellers would suddenly come down into Tarīm by the 'Aqabat Bā 'Ashmī where the Al Kāf motor road ran at one time, experiencing that tremendous contrast between the rocky wastes and the Wādī Hadhramaut that so many travellers since Páez have described.

Hainin to Marib. When the fathers left Hainin, they did a rather unusual thing. They kept to the *northern* side of the Wādī Hadhramaut, and after travelling an evening and two days, they arrived at "the last fort of the kingdom" which can only be Husn al-'Abr, which is ancient enough as it was known to Hamdānī, 'Jazīrat al 'Arab,' (index). Nearly all other accounts of the Hadhramaut–Marib route in Arabic or in other languages, describe the *southern* route via Shabwa. For instance Saiyid Ahmad b. Hasan al-'Attās in a MS. work copied at Huraidha in 1948, 'Risāla fi Ansāb al-Qabāil al-Sākinīn bi-Hadhramaut,' writing in 1313 H., gives the following itinerary. "Now concerning what lies between San'ā and Hadhramaut, from 'Urūdh Āl 'Āmir to the lowest part of Wādī Duhur belonging to the 'Ubaidī and Nahdī (tribes) is the first stage; a second stage runs from this Wādī to Ramlat Shabwa, a third stage to Sāfir of the mountain of salt, a fourth stage from Sāfir to Marib of Sabā, a fifth stage from Sirwāh to al-Jamra (name dubious) a village of Khaulan, and a seventh stage from al-Jamra to San'ā till about mid-day." The stages between Marib and San'ā however seem a little long as compared with other travellers.

Philby is of the opinion, 'Daughters of Sheba,' London, 1939, that there are many routes across this desert to Marib. Judging from his maps and the American 'World Aeronautical Chart' (Restricted) Sheet no. 687, Sāfir lies some 85 miles west of al-'Abr as the crow flies. It would be a fair estimate to allow 120 miles on the ground for this distance, making approximately 30 miles per day over the four-day journey from 'Abr to Sāfir. From here about two days of travelling should bring one to Marib, though of course we have yet no reliable maps or distances for this part of Arabia. Sāfir then might conceivably be the well at which they arrived.

Now, it has been assumed that the fathers made for Marib although they do not mention this name, but speak of a place called Melquis. This need not however present any difficulty for Nazīh al-Muaiyad (*op. cit.*) mentions Haram Bilqīs as one of the great buildings of Marib, and a more recent traveller than any, A. Fakhri, "Les Antiquités du Yémen, Un Voyage à Ṣirwāḥ, Mârib et Él-Gôf," *Muséon*, 61 (1948) 227 calls the ruin Mahram Bilqīs, and it is apparently the great temple of 'Almaqah. A corruption of this name into Melquis would seem reasonable.

From Marib it might look as if the fathers had taken an unconscionably long time to reach San'ā to judge by the times given by other travellers. The party was however, taking with it a present of four horses as a *douceur* from the Kathīrī Sultan to the Basha of San'ā. After six days of continuous desert travelling in July these animals would be in very poor condition, even if their fodder had been conveyed on the camels, which themselves would be in poor condition after the long mid-summer journey without pasture. Unquestionably

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the escort would linger on the way to San'ā to allow horses and camels to graze and recover their condition.

For the San'ā–Marib route, Ahmad Fakhri's itinerary might be quoted here, although the itineraries given by the several travellers [1] to Marib suggest that there are various ways there. Ahmad Fakhri left San'ā on May 1 by Sha'ūb, Wādī 'l-Sirr, al-Raudha, to spend the night at Ghadrān. Leaving Wādī 'l-Sirr for Wādī 'l-Shurafā next day they spent the night at al-Ahzuq; the third day they passed through the *naqīl* (pass) of Shuja' beyond which Harīb al-Qarāmīsh begins, spending the night at al-Akamah. The next day eight hours' journey brought them to Qā' Sirwāh, and later on eight and a half hours of travel took them into Marib. The whole might be reckoned as four days of travelling. Whether the fathers took this northerly route, or one of those lying farther to the south we have no evidence to help us to decide. One wonders indeed why they did not cross the desert by the Shabwa route, and it may be that political conditions did not allow of this, but until the historical material relating to this area and period has been published, it is impossible to say.

[1] Anastase Marie de St. Elie, "Aventures d' un Voyage en 1861 dans le Yémen," *Anthropos*, 4 (1909) describes the travels of Khodja Mikha Youssif an-Najjar of Baghdad to Marib, but while the account of this traveller's journey contains some useful information, it is entirely lacking in topographical data which might assist us to suggest a route for the two priests. The travels and reports of Halévy and Glaser are of course well known, the account of Halévy's guide Habshūsh having been discussed by Philby in *Geogr. J.* 102 (1943) 116–24.

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